(c) whether oil marketing agencies have revised the plan to increase marketing of diesel through new strategy; and

(d) whether there is any testing agency to which supplies from petroleum companies are subjected to in qualitative terms?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The Government have granted the rights for marketing of transportation fuels to new companies in terms of the Government resolution of 08.03.2002. These companies have started commissioning retail outlets and sales at these retail outlets are largely carved out of the sales of existing outlets of PSU Oil Marketing Companies. Hence, diesel retail sales have fallen by 5.9% for PSUs in the first quarter of 2005-06 (April-June 2005). In the de-regulated scenario, the Public Sector oil marketing companies are continuously reviewing their strategy in view of the market conditions.

(d) The names of laboratories which can be approached for testing the quality of petrol and diesel are listed in the MS/HSD Control Order.

Closure of LPG bottling trafficking plants

1676. SHRIMATI S.G INDIRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to recent LPG tanker operators strike, 13 bottling plants out of 16 were shut down in Tamil Nadu alone;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to resolve the issue between the LPG Tanker operators and PSU oil companies to ensure that such strikes are not not called frequently?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) At present, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are operating 18 bottling plants in Tamil Nadu. OMCs have reported that none of their plants was completely shut down owing to transporters' strike during the period between 8th July 2005 and 22nd July 2005. However, intermittent stoppage of bottling was experienced at the Chennai plant of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and

some of the bottling plants of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL). There was also an interruption in production for about 13 hours at one of the bottling plants of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) at Coimbatore, which is rail fed owing to safety inspection of tracks by the Railway Authorities.

(c) The strike was called by the Transport Associations for modification/ deletion of certain terms and conditions in the tender floated recently by the OMCs. However, after the intervention of the Minister, at which various details were explained to the representatives of the transporters, the strike was called off on the 22nd July 2005.

Separate department for energy

1677. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to create a separate Department for energy within the Ministry;

(b) if so, the reasons for creating a separate Department for energy; and

(c) whether the Public Sector Undertakings are also going to be bifurcated between the Ministry and the proposed new Department?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI
SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Jagadishpur-Haldia Pipeline Project

1678. SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether GAIL has any plans to lay gas pipeline from Jagadishpur to Kolkata/Haldia;

(b) if so, the details of the same; and

(c) the project cost, anticipated time for completion and tentative zero-date for commencement of the project?